

VZCZCXRO9982
PP RUEHFK
DE RUEHKO #1540 0830301
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 240301Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0086
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA// PRIORITY
RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 5295
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 8442
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1302
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0945
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7490
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 9445
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS TOKYO 001540

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION BUSH PRESS CONFERENCE

- TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Friday morning's Sankei front-paged a report from London that the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has estimated that China imported a total of 13.3 billion USD worth of conventional weapons between 2001 and 2005, making it the world's largest arms importer.

¶1. "President Bush Should Stabilize Iraq During His Term in Office" The liberal Mainichi editorialized (3/24): "At a White House press conference, President Bush dismissed the idea of a complete US withdrawal from Iraq during his term in office, which runs through January 2009. With attention focused on the timing of a withdrawal of Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force troops from the southern Iraqi city of Samawah, we cannot overlook his remarks.... The president also said that a US withdrawal would be decided on by a future president in consultation with the Iraqi government. He stopped short of concluding that fighting would continue through 2009, as it is possible that the US military will continue to stay in Iraq at the request of the Iraqi government even if the situation there stabilizes. At the press conference, Mr. Bush said that fierce fighting would continue. A straightforward interpretation of these remarks is that the chaos in Iraq will not be easily resolved and will continue even after the inauguration of his successor....

¶2. "Is this acceptable? We are not calling on the president to give up on the situation there and withdraw US troops; doing so would be irresponsible. However, complacency on the part of the US would place its allies in a bind. It will certainly not be easy to compile a policy that will stabilize Iraq, but it is reasonable to

expect that President Bush will do his utmost to bring an end to the war he started there. The impact of the Iraq war has reached every corner of the world. Although US allies, including Japan, are contributing both directly and indirectly to the maintenance of peace and the promotion of reconstruction in Iraq, the continued fighting in the center of the Middle East is a major destabilizing factor for the international community. With the chaos in Iraq making it ground zero for terrorism, the situation needs to be taken care of as quickly as possible."

SCHIEFFER